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Ag 84 Pro #354

*Better Opportunities in 1958 —*

# THE CONSERVATION RESERVE

of the

#354

## SOIL BANK



Farmers have increased opportunities to use the Conservation Reserve of the Soil Bank effectively and profitably this year.

The program has been broadened. Beginning in 1958, more producers will find that it is to their advantage to put land in the Conservation Reserve.

There is greater encouragement for putting whole farm units under the program. It is more attractive for summer fallow areas, and for areas where a large part of the cropland is devoted to tame hay. There is more emphasis on wildlife and forestry practices, with a wider choice of contract periods. Higher rates of payment are available.

All farmers in all States are eligible to take part in the Conservation Reserve.

By taking part in the program, farmers can make a sound long-term investment in better land use—at the same time earning substantial payments to help maintain net income while the shift is being made to conservation uses.

### **Conservation Reserve Objectives**

There are two main objectives of the Conservation Reserve:

- (1) To withdraw general cropland from production which is not needed now. This helps adjust total production and reduce surpluses.
- (2) To establish and maintain sound conservation practices on the land shifted to the Reserve—to build soil, water, forestry, and wildlife resources for the

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future. While everyone has a stake in national conservation efforts, the farmer who carries out the practice gains most directly. The improved resources are on his farm, and will yield dividends in the years ahead.

## **How to Take Part**

The Conservation Reserve is a voluntary program. Each producer makes his own decision about participation, after checking the opportunities and advantages for his farm.

If he decides to take part, he signs a contract at his local county Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation (ASC) office. The county Committee acts as an agent of the Secretary of Agriculture—both in supplying program details and in accepting contracts.

Under the contract, the Secretary agrees to make payments during the period of the contract, and to protect “allotment” history if any basic crops are diverted to the Conservation Reserve. The producer agrees to keep approved conservation practices on the specific tracts of land in the Reserve during the term of the contract, not to graze or harvest a crop from the designated land, and to comply with other general program provisions.

Contracts may be for 3, 5, or 10 years when an approved cover crop is already established on the land to be put in the program. When cover has to be established, a water storage dam has to be built, or land is to be devoted to plantings for shelterbelt, windbreak, or wildlife habitat purposes, contracts are offered for 5 to 10 years, at the option of the producer. Tree plantings for forestry purposes must be 10-year contracts.

## **Payment Rates**

Under 5- and 10-year contracts—when conservation practices have to be established—a Federal cost-share payment for establishing the practice will be made to the producer. This may range up to 80 percent of the average cost of establishing the practice.

Under all contracts where land is diverted from crop production to the Conservation Reserve, an annual rental payment will also be made each year the contracts are in effect.

These payments, which begin with the first year of the contract, will be based on a national average of \$10 an acre. The rates for individual counties and farms will vary according to relative productivity, land values, and other factors.

In addition to the "full rate" annual payments for land diverted from crop production to conserving uses, there is provision for a lower "non-diversion" rate when other eligible land, such as hay land, is put in the Reserve. This rate has been at 30 percent of the regular annual payment rate.

Beginning in 1958, however, producers may earn a much higher "non-diversion" rate. The rate may be raised by the County ASC Committee to 50 percent of the regular rate when all eligible land on the farm is placed in the Conservation Reserve, or for any such land planted to forest trees. It may be raised to 100 percent when all eligible land is planted to trees. There are also more liberal provisions governing eligibility to earn the usual non-diversion rate. County ASC Committees have the information.

## **Eligible Land**

In general, all farm land used for cultivated crops or for tame hay is eligible for the Conservation Reserve.

There is no limit on the maximum number of acres which can be put in the Conservation Reserve. A farmer can put all his cropland in the program. There is, however, a limit of \$5,000 on the total annual payment a producer can receive in one program year for all farms in which he has an interest.

In most counties, the smallest amount of land which can be put in the Conservation Reserve is 5 acres—or 2 acres if trees are to be planted.

## **Conservation Reserve Practices**

There is a list of approved practices for each county. The farmer picks from this list the practices best suited to his needs.

Generally, the approved practices include: **Land cover**—practices which will help get a protective cover of grasses and legumes, or trees, or shrubs established on the land; **water conservation**—dams, pits, or ponds to help conserve water for better land management or for

irrigation of land in the Conservation Reserve; and **wildlife habitat**—including cover, water, or marsh improvement to conserve wildlife. For wildlife practices, beginning in 1958, farmers may accept help from non-federal sources without reducing the Federal cost-share payment.

A Soil Bank base will be established for each farm which is to take part in the Conservation Reserve for the first time in 1958. It will be similar to the base for farms which were in the Conservation Reserve in 1957, and the base which is being established for farms under the Acreage Reserve for 1958.

The 1958 base will be the average amount of land planted to Soil Bank base crops in 1956 and 1957. Soil Bank base crops can generally be classified as grain and row crops.

Those who take part in the Conservation Reserve in 1958, earning the "full rate" payments, will be required to reduce their total acreage of Soil Bank base crops by the number of acres they put in the Conservation Reserve.

## **When to Sign Up**

The signup period for those who wish to take part in the Conservation Reserve program, under contracts beginning in 1958, extends through April 15, 1958.

County agricultural agents and representatives of the State and Federal Forest Services and the Soil Conservation Service have information and services to offer on locally applicable phases of the Conservation Reserve program.

**For detailed information on program opportunities, and application to your farm, see your local ASC Committee.**

**CHECK SOON — YOU CAN MAKE  
CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF THE  
CONSERVATION RESERVE  
THIS YEAR**